

Agencies and Organizations Assisting Farmers

MAINE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND RURAL RESOURCES

28 State House Station, Augusta, ME 04333
207-287-3871

"get real. get maine!"

a promotional branding campaign, to increase public awareness of Maine products, **Division of Market and Production Development, 287-3491**

Farmland Protection Program, 287-7520

Ag Business Planning Assistance

- **Farms for the Future**, administered jointly with Coastal Enterprises Inc., provides farmers grants to develop and implement business plans. **Dept. 287-7520** and **287-7620, CEI 772-5356**
- **NxLevel Business Planning**, coordinated by NRCS Heart of Maine Resource Conservation and Development Council, 368-4433
- **Food and Farms Resource Guide**—*Handbook for Maine Agricultural Businesses* provides farmers information on various agricultural subjects and programs. **287-3491**

Ag Business Loans and Grants

- Agricultural Marketing Loan Fund
- Potato Marketing Improvement Fund
- Agricultural Development Grant
- Agricultural Technical Assistance Grant Program
- Agricultural Water Source Development Cost Share Program

MAINE FARM BUREAU

A non-governmental, voluntary organization whose mission it is to analyze economic and public problems surrounding agriculture in Maine. Augusta, **622-4111**

MAINE FARM CREDIT

Specializes in lending to Maine's agricultural, fishing and forest products industries. Aroostook Regional Office, Presque Isle, **764-6431**; or Southern Regional Office, Auburn, **784-0193**

MAINE FARMLAND TRUST

A membership-based, non-profit organization working in the public's interest to protect Maine's precious farmland resources. Bucksport, **469-6465**

MAINE FARMLINK

A farm transfer program that connects farmers seeking farmland with retiring Maine farmers and farm owners who wish to see their agricultural lands remain active. Currently there are 35 prospective sellers and 67 prospective buyers statewide with 17 prospects in Hancock County. Freedom, **382-3255**

MAINE ORGANIC FARMERS AND GARDENERS ASSOCIATION

Developed from a loose affiliation of farmers and gardeners committed to growing healthy, chemical free food, to an internationally recognized advocate for food production that enhances and protects the ecological as well as economic vitality of rural communities. Unity, **568-4142**

MAINE WOMEN'S AGRICULTURAL NETWORK

A collaborative effort of farmers, agriculture and related non-profit, for profit and governmental agencies seeking to help women and other underserved individuals find the skills necessary to begin or continue farming profitably. Lisbon Falls, **800-287-1458**

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Assists farmers, landowners and communities with conserving and protecting natural resources. Each District works in partnership with the **USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), USDA Farm Service Agency** and other federal, state and local agencies, including the **NRCS-Resource Conservation and Development Council**. Ellsworth, **667-8663**

UNIVERSITY OF MAINE COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

A major educational outreach program of the University of Maine with offices statewide. Ellsworth, **800-287-1479** or statewide **800-287-0274**

Web Links

United States Department of Agriculture
www.usda.gov

USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)
www.nrcs.usda.gov

Maine Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Resources
www.maine.gov/argiculture/

"get real. get maine!"
www.getrealmaine.com

Maine State Web Portal
www.maine.gov

Maine Food and Farms Resource Guide
www.getrealmaine.com/connect/

References

- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
- USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service
- USDA Farm Service Agency
- Maine Revenue Service

Hancock County

2003-2004 COUNTY PROFILE OF MAINE AGRICULTURAL ENTERPRISES

Maine's agricultural future is inextricably linked to its ability to continue to build strong, long-lasting connections between farmers and the communities they serve. To help all citizens better understand how agriculture is connected to every aspect of life in Maine, this county profile provides citizens, community planners and natural resource conservation groups important facts about farmers, farms, farmland and agricultural enterprises in Hancock County.

Farmers in Hancock County



	1974	1978	1982	1992	1997
Farming as Principal Occupation	68	84	100	91	118
Male Operators (N)	218	248	237	244	
Female Operators (N)	NA	35	38	54	66
Average Age	55	51	51	56	56

*USDA/Dept. of Commerce, Agriculture Census 1974-1997

Statewide, farming has a unique connection to the history of Maine. Farmers are stewards of the land; well-managed farmland protects natural resources and creates beautiful open space. Many of Maine's first settlers were farmers whose fields, farmhouses and barns shaped Maine's historic landscape. Today, Maine's agricultural producers and processors annually contribute over 1.2 billion dollars to Maine's economy and employ 65,000 Maine people!

County Farmland

	1974	1978	1982	1992	1997
Number of Farms	183	253	286	291	310
Total Acres (A)	42,534	43,042	51,326	50,076	42,607
Average Farm Size (A)	232	170	179	172	137
Total Cropland (A)	6,980	12,082	11,684	12,226	11,121
Total Pasture (A)	NA	2,922	4,971	3,281	3,199
Total Orchard (A)	52	76	110	156	101
Total Berry (A)	2,132	3,260	NA	NA	3,541
Total Hay (A)	1,332	2,552	3,159	2,907	2,122
Total Woodland (A)	31,481	25,802	32,570	31,604	25,959



*USDA/Dept. of Commerce, Agriculture Census 1974-1997.

Land in farms decreased 15 percent from 50,076 acres in 1992 to 42,607 acres in 1997. Full time farms increased 20 percent from 91 farms in 1992 to 118 farms in 1997.



November 2003

Unique to Hancock County

- There are 16 granges in the county. **County Grange**, James Grindle, Master, 374-5310.
- County Chapter **Maine Farm Bureau**, President, Gary Sargent, Surry, 667-6501
- **Maine Organic Blueberry Growers Co-op**, Orland, 469-3003
- **“Buy Local, Eat Fresh Delivery”** created with support from Hancock County Planning Commission, provides coordination and distribution services to connect local farmers with over 50 restaurants and retail stores in the greater coastal Hancock County area. Ellsworth, 667-7131
- **Land Trust Organizations**
Blue Hill Heritage Trust (founded 1985) 374-5118; *The Conservation Trust of Brooksville, Castine and Penobscot* (1977) 326-9711; *Frenchman Bay Conservancy* (1987) 22-2328; *Great Pond Mountain Conservation Trust* (1993) 469-6722; *Island Heritage Trust* (1987) 348-2455; *Islesboro Islands Trust* (1985) 734-6907
- The **State Historic Preservation Office** (287-2132) and **Maine Preservation** (775-7737) have information regarding the county’s agriculturally related places of historic and cultural significance.



Food, Farms* and Fairs in Hancock County

- 46 Farmstands/Nurseries/Greenhouses open to the public
- 5 Farmers’ Markets serving multiple communities
- 6 Farms offer Pick-Your-Own fruits and vegetables
- 5 Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Farms contract directly with their customers who pay a fixed price in advance for fresh produce throughout the season
- 18 Farms host special on-farm events and activities such as pumpkin hunts, animal viewing, hayrides and school programs
- 1 Agricultural Fair (Blue Hill) drew up to 32,825 people in 2002

Prime Soils in Hancock County

PRIME FARMLAND

The U.S. Department of Agriculture defines prime farmland as the land that is best suited to producing food, feed, forage, fiber and oilseed crops. It has the soil quality, growing season, and moisture supply needed to produce a sustained high yield of crops while using acceptable farming methods. Prime Farmland produces the highest yields and requires minimal amounts of energy and economic resources, and farming it results in the least damage to the environment. Prime Farmland is a limited strategic resource. No more of it is being created.

Southern Part of Hancock County
23,196 acres (estimated)

SOILS OF STATEWIDE IMPORTANCE

This is land, in addition to prime and unique farmlands, that is of statewide significance for the production of food, feed, fiber, forage, and oilseed crops. Criteria for defining and delineating this land are to be determined by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. Generally, additional farmlands of statewide importance include those that are nearly prime farmland and that economically produce a high yield as prime farmlands if conditions are favorable.

Southern Part of Hancock County
92,934 acres (estimated)

Annual Statewide Events and Programs in 2003

Maine Maple Sunday (4th Sunday in March) 5 farms opened their sugarhouses.

Open Farm Day (4th Sunday in July) 4 farms welcomed the public onto their farms.

Maine Menus Month (October) 13 restaurants made special efforts to feature Maine grown, raised or harvested ingredients on their menus.

Great Maine Apple Day (November) many farms celebrated Maine’s apple harvest.

Maine Senior Farm Share assisted 10 farmers with providing locally grown produce to 294 low-income seniors. Statewide, 185 farmers benefited from nearly \$900,000 in sales and additional seniors received fresh produce through food pantries and community meal sites.

** Some farms may be counted in multiple categories. Not all farm activities and retail services are listed here.*



Farmland Protected in Hancock County

PERMANENTLY PROTECTED

- 324 acres (2 farms) have been protected by the Land for Maine’s Future Program & the USDA Farm and Ranchland Protection Program
- 1,918 acres (17 farms) have been protected by three nonprofit organizations

TEMPORARILY PROTECTED

Maine Dept. of Agriculture

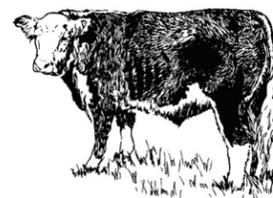
- 237 acres protected by Farms for the Future (5 years)

Enrolled in Farm and Open Space Tax Program

- 3,843 acres farmland in 2002 — 2,135 acres cropland and 1,708 acres woodland
- 3,495 acres open space in 2001

Enrolled in Tree Growth Tax Program

- 233,880 acres in 2001



Hancock County Agricultural Sales

	1974	1978	1982	1992	1997
All crops	\$854,000	\$2,089,000	NA	NA	NA
Livestock/poultry and their products	\$1,562,000	\$2,119,000	NA	NA	NA
Nursery and greenhouse products	\$328,000	\$396,000	\$636,000	\$1,199,000	\$1,508,000
Fruits, nuts and berries	NA	\$1,555,000	\$4,065,000	\$3,380,000	\$4,603,000

**USDA/Dept. of Commerce, Agriculture Census 1974-1997*

The average market value of agricultural products sold in the county increased 88 percent from \$52,357 in 1992 to \$98,218 in 1997. Statewide market research in 2002 showed that 89 percent surveyed believe that buying locally grown food strengthens Maine’s economy.